

United States District Court

SOUTHERN

DISTRICT OF

TEXAS

MCALLEN DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

V.

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Armando Miguel Ceballos

PRINCIPAL

A202 085 721

YOB:

1982

United States District Court
Southern District of Texas
FILED

Case Number:

M-15-834 -M

MAY 23 2015

(Name and Address of Defendant)

Clerk of Court

I, the undersigned complainant being duly sworn state the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. On or about May 21, 2015 in Hidalgo County, in the Southern District of Texas defendants(s) did,
(Track Statutory Language of Offense)

knowing or in reckless disregard of the fact that Christian Efrain Maldonado-Martinez, citizen of the Honduras and Francisco Antonio Cortez-Cruz, citizen of El Salvador and Maria Yesenia Urbina-Hernandez, citizen of El Salvador, and three (3) other undocumented aliens for a total of six (6), who had entered the United States in violation of law, did knowingly transport, or move or attempt to transport said aliens in furtherance of such violation of law within the United States, that is, from a location near McAllen, Texas to the point of arrest near San Manuel, Texas.

in violation of Title 8 United States Code, Section(s) 1324(a)(1)(A)(ii) FELONY

I further state that I am a(n) U.S. Senior Border Patrol Agent and that this complaint is based on the following facts:

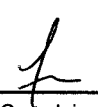
On May 21, 2015, Border Patrol Agents (BPA) assigned to Operation Shortstop working roving patrol duties on U.S. Highway 281 north of San Manuel, Texas, apprehended a 1 on 6 Alien Smuggling Case.

On May 21, 2015 at approximately 1600 hours, Rio Grande Valley Sector Intelligence agents were surveying a 2009 Ford F-150 4x4 four door truck (TX license plates FRY2362) identified previously as a suspected alien smuggling, scout/transport vehicle located at 7501 Colorado St Pharr, Texas.

At approximately 1700 hours agents followed the Ford truck to a car wash located on Jordan Ave in McAllen, Texas, and then to a house located at 2224 South 31st in McAllen, Texas. Agents surveyed the truck as its unidentified driver parked it in the garage area of the house which faced the street.

SEE ATTACHED

Continued on the attached sheet and made a part of this complaint:

☒ Yes ☐ No

Signature of Complainant

Julio Ibarra

Senior Patrol Agent

Printed Name of Complainant

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence,

May 23, 2015

Date


at McAllen, Texas

City and State

Dorina Ramos

, U. S. Magistrate Judge

Name and Title of Judicial Officer


Signature of Judicial Officer

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
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At approximately 1930 hours agents observed the white F-150 exit the driveway of 2224 south 31st in McAllen, Texas. Agents in unmarked surveillance vehicles traveling parallel with the F-150 noticed several silhouettes of multiple occupants in the passenger cabin of the vehicle through the driver and front passenger side windows, the rear windows were too darkly tinted to see through.

Agents continued surveillance as the vehicle exited Expressway 83 onto the north Hwy 281 ramp. As the F-150 neared the Freddy Gonzalez exit traveling north, agents soon recognized a white 2012 Honda Accord following the F-150. Agents recognized the driver of the Honda as a scout for alien smuggling loads in the Falfurrias, Texas area.

Agents relayed their observations to marked Border Patrol Units conducting highway operations along Highway 281.

BPA David Kasko observed the F-150 pass by his static position on US highway 281 and noticed it riding lower than normal. BPA Kasko followed closely behind the F-150, while BPA Jaime Gloria pulled up alongside the F-150. BPA Gloria stated that he noticed the operator of the vehicle driving unresponsive to the presence of Agents around his vehicle. BPA Gloria continued to drive parallel alongside the F-150 for a short distance noticing that the driver continued to keep his steady gaze directly ahead of him.

Agent Kasko activated his emergency lights and attempted to conduct an Immigration inspection of the occupants in the F-150. The driver of the white Ford F-150 briefly swerved and continued to drive north. The F-150 drove for about 15 seconds, before veering off the road and coming to a stop. Multiple subjects were observed jumping from the bed and exiting the cab of the truck in attempts to abscond. Agents were able to apprehend seven subjects in the immediate area around the F-150.

Agents conducted a field interview of the apprehended subjects determining that six crossed illegally into the United States and did not possess any documents to remain or reside in the United States legally. The driver which was determined to be a United States citizen, was apprehended from the driver seat of the F-150.

Intelligence Agents alerted agents that the white Honda Accord had taken a turnaround on US Highway 281 and began to go southbound shortly after the traffic stop was conducted on the F-150. Supervisory Border Patrol Agent Jerald Simmons requested that any available Agent conduct a vehicle stop on the white Honda in order to identify the driver. Agent Cortez approached the white Honda Accord and conduct a vehicle stop. The driver of the white Honda Accord was identified as a scout for Alien Smuggling.

All eight subjects were placed under arrest and transported to the Weslaco, Texas Border Patrol Station.

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PRINCIPAL STATEMENT

Armando Miguel Ceballos was administered his Miranda Warnings and stated that he understood his rights. Ceballos stated that he was willing to answer questions without the presence of an attorney.

Ceballos stated that when he was arrested he was transporting approximately seven illegal aliens and one subject who he believed to be a brush guide. Ceballos stated that he was offered a job to smuggle the aliens from a friend of his brother-in-law. He subsequently agreed to transport the illegal aliens in exchange for the use of the truck, to travel to San Antonio, and \$100 USD for gas. Ceballos claims that this was his third time transporting illegal aliens in the white F-150 and that he was compensated with \$100 USD and the use of the truck for each trip.

MATERIAL WITNESS STATEMENTS

The three material witnesses were read their Miranda rights. All stated they were willing to provide statements without the presence of an attorney.

1. Christian Efrain Maldonado-Martinez stated that his family made arrangements with an unknown smuggler. Maldonado recalled that he was being charged \$3,000 USD to be smuggled from McAllen, Texas, to Houston, Texas. Maldonado and eight other undocumented aliens illegally waded the Rio Grande River on or about May 17, 2015 with the aid of a foot guide. Maldonado and the group walked for approximately forty minutes until they arrived at a brushy area where they boarded an awaiting brown van. The driver of the van drove them to a house in McAllen, Texas. Maldonado claims he was with nine other undocumented aliens until May 22, 2015. Maldonado stated he and the other undocumented aliens boarded a white Ford truck at the stash house. Maldonado claims that he was positioned in a kneeling position behind the passenger seat of the cab, along with six other individuals. Maldonado stated that they traveled for approximately thirty minutes until they were apprehended by Border Patrol Agents.

Maldonado positively identified Armando Miguel Ceballos in a photo lineup as the driver of the white truck.

2. Francisco Antonio Cortez-Cruz stated that he made smuggling arrangements in El Salvador. Cortez stated that he was being charged a total of \$8,500 USD to be smuggled into the United States. On March 10, 2015 Cortez and thirty other illegal immigrants illegally crossed the Rio Grande River into the United States. Shortly after crossing the group encountered the Border Patrol. The group subsequently ran and eventually six individual regrouped and were then picked up by a truck. Cortez stated that he was taken to several stash houses over the course of a month and a half. On May 21, 2015, Cortez was instructed to board a white Ford F-150. He then traveled in the pickup for about 45 minutes and then was pulled over by Border Patrol Agents and arrested.

Cortez positively identified Armando Miguel Ceballos in a photo lineup as the driver of the white truck.

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3. Maria Yesenia Urbina-Hernandez stated that she made smuggling arrangements with subject by the name of Rosie, in El Salvador. Urbina paid \$7000 USD to be taken from El Salvador to Houston, Texas. On May 15, 2015, she crossed the Rio Grande River into the United States along with a group of ten other illegal aliens. Urbina stated that she was transported from the Rio Grande River to a stash house where she remained for approximately one week. On May 21, 2015 she was told to board a white Ford F-150. Once in the vehicle the driver told her to keep her head down so that she wouldn't been seen. Urbina stated she traveled for approximately twenty to thirty minutes and then Border Patrol stopped the truck.

URBINA positively identified Armando Miguel Ceballos in a photo lineup as the driver of the white truck.